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1 Corinthians 7:14 and Children in the Church

Ernest Best

This verse which is often referred to in discussions of infant baptism is set in the middle of Paul's instructions on marriage and divorce to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7) and raises a number of important problems most of which are irrelevant to the status of children. In 7.10f Paul quotes Jesus on the rejection of divorce and then continues (7.12-16), apparently on his own without any claim to the authority of Jesus, to permit separation under certain circumstances. In discussing the reference to children we do not need however to ask how Paul regarded his own authority in relation to that of Jesus nor to consider the conditions under which divorce should be permitted. When Jesus spoke about divorce (Mark 10.1-12) he was referring only to marriages between Jews. In Corinth Paul faced a new situation in a largely Gentile church when one marriage partner became a believer and the other did not. He does nothing to encourage such marriages (if Christians marry they should marry within the church, 7.39), but where they already exist may the partners separate? Two different answers are possible depending on the reaction of the unbelieving partner who may either wish to end the marriage and Paul deals with this in v. 15 or may be happy to continue it and Paul deals with this in vv. 12-14. It is while dealing with the latter possibility that he refers to children.

The question probably arose in the Corinthian church because of the vivid sense which believers had of their separation from the world (cf 5.6-13). Christian partners in the marriage may have become worried about their own possible defilement through their association with their unbelieving consorts (6.12-20) or other members of the community become alarmed lest the continuance of mixed marriages should defile the whole community.



It is clear Paul believes the continuance of the marriage is the proper course. How then does he argue for it? He might have quoted Jesus as he did in v.10 or like Jesus have referred to the Old Testament creation story (Mk 10.6-9) and argued for the sanctity of marriage on its basis--the two have become one flesh. While these ideas may have been at the back of his mind his ostensible argument is that of v. 14--note the 'for' at its beginning. This verse itself makes two statements and the second, which refers to children, supplies the reason for accepting the first. Moreover the way Paul puts the argument suggests that he regards the second statement as axiomatic. The marriage is in fact to be continued because both the children and the unbelieving parent are consecrated or holy.

Who are the children referred to in v.14? At first sight the flow of the argument suggests that they are those of the mixed marriage whether born before or after the conversion of the believing partner. However Paul's use of the second person plural 'your children' probably implies that he has in mind all the children of the Christian community, both those from mixed marriages and those from marriages in which both partners believe. We are not told the age of the children and the Greek word is used both of young and 'adult' children (for adult children see Tit. 1.6; 1 Tim. 3.4f; Col. 3.20f; Eph. 6.1-4, where in each case the children are old enough to be held responsible for their behaviour). We can probably assume that the children are still members of the parental household and have not left it.

Paul affirms that these children are not 'unclean' but 'holy' (the term he uses of the unbelieving partner in the marriage, 'consecrated', is drawn from the verb which supplies the adjective 'holy'; to consecrate is to make holy). It is Paul's use of these terms that makes this verse difficult to understand. We normally

associate holiness with belief in Christ; how then can those who are children and either too young to believe or as older children and mature members of the household have refused to join the believing partner in the faith be described as holy?

It is occasionally suggested that all Paul is saying is that the children are 'legitimate' (unclean = illegitimate, holy = legitimate). There does not appear to be any evidence for the Greek words being used with this sense. Were the reasoning correct it would imply that (1) all non-Christian marriages were illegitimate, and (2) that the children in mind must be those of mixed marriages alone. Such an interpretation would also fail to meet the worries of both the community and the Christian partners in mixed marriages for their worries do not relate to the legality of the marriages but whether they contaminate the community or the believing spouse or whether the possible strains within mixed marriages necessitate their dissolution. Again this interpretation would imply that a marriage which was previously illegitimate because it was contracted between two pagans suddenly became legitimate when one or both were converted.

Setting aside such a view as irrelevant (it seems to be used only by those who wish to protect themselves from conclusions from scripture which might affect their faith adversely) we need to ask what Paul means by 'holiness' and 'uncleanness'. Both terms are drawn from the Old Testament and were important in the Judaism of his day. In the Old Testament they are used not only of people but also of 'things', e.g. the temple and its vessels. In either case they regularly possess a ritual aspect. Paul however refers only to people as 'holy', with the possible exception of his description of the liturgical 'kiss' (1 Cor 16.20; 2 Cor 13.12; 1 Thess. 5.26). The ritual aspect may therefore be said to be at a minimum for Paul. Uncleanness is also normally used by Paul in relation to people (2 Cor. 12.21; Gal. 5.19), though in the



Gospels the demons exorcised by Jesus are often so described. Paul uses the concept 'holy' much more frequently than he does 'unclean', and applies it to believers when he calls them 'saints'. 'Saints' may be defined either as those who believe in Christ or as those who have been baptised (Paul would probably have seen no distinction between these two definitions). The group of saints or holy people form the church which is then holy (1 Cor. 3.17) and is distinct and separate from the world. Used in this way 'holy' describes a 'standing' before God which he gives to those who believe in Christ. To be holy is to be within the church, within the covenant. 'Holiness' is however also used in another way, with an ethical connotation: it is something for which believers should strive (Rom. 6.19-22; 1 Thess. 3.12-13; 5.23). Uncleaness for its part is something which belongs by its very nature to the pagan world outside the church (1 Thess. 4.7; Rom. 6.19).

We can now return to v.14. Some upholders of infant baptism have argued that if the children of mixed marriages are 'holy' this must imply that they had been baptised, but as we have seen Paul has not necessarily babies in mind. Since he refutes the suggestion that the children are 'unclean' it is probable that some in the Corinthian community did so consider them, and they would hardly have thought this if the children had been baptised. On the other hand if households were baptised on the conversion of one member (Acts 16.15,33) the children and the unbelieving consort would have been baptised. If we argue here for infant baptism are we then also to conclude that the unbelieving partner was baptised because he/she is described as 'consecrated', i.e. holy?

If holiness is associated with belief and/or baptism either as status attained or as an ideal which believers should pursue we appear to have in v.14 an unusual use of the concept in which it can be transferred from one person to another even though that

second person does not fulfil the condition of belief or has not been baptised and cannot be said to be 'saved' (v.16 implies this by leaving open the future conversion of the unbelieving spouse). The saints or holy ones are normally taken elsewhere to be those who have been saved. Arguing in this way it has been supposed that Paul has reverted here either to a pagan conception of holiness or to one common in earlier parts of the Old Testament but later abandoned where holiness is regarded in a physical or quasi-physical way (2 Sam. 6.6,7 where Uzzah touches the ark and is struck dead is often given as an example). Holiness would then be transmitted as a kind of fluid from the believer to the pagan partner and the children so that they also could be described as holy. Such an understanding would imply that Paul imparted here a unique meaning to the concept of holiness and while it must be allowed that unique meanings of words and concepts, given a suitable cultural background, are possible, it is always better to look for consistency in the way authors express themselves. Paul assumes that what he says here can be understood by the Corinthians without further explanation which would imply that he taught them this primitive understanding of holiness while he was with them; since however he normally uses another view we might reasonably expect him to differentiate between the two views and to find this 'physical' understanding in other epistles; it is not there.

Sometimes it is argued that the pagan partner can be said to be acting willingly (note 'consents' in vv. 12f) in a holy manner because he/she does not seek to dissolve the marriage, for in so doing they would be showing respect for Jesus' teaching on marriage (v. 10). This argument can however hardly be extended to the children of the marriage for they have no say over its continuance, and the consecration of the pagan partner is based on the holiness of the children (v.14a depends on v.14b). A further difficulty in this argument is the verbal form of 'consecrated'; this is a



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perfect tense which in Greek normally indicates an action beginning at a point in the past and having a continuing effect. Was there then a point, perhaps when the believer was converted, at which the pagan partner decided that the marriage should not break down and has that partner continued to hold by this position? It is more probable that the pagan partner gradually coming to realise what the conversion of the spouse meant also gradually concluded that divorce should not be sought. The perfect tense also appears to exclude any idea of the believing partner exercising slow moral influence on the unbeliever until conversion took place. Finally since the perfect tense places in the past the moment when the holiness of the unbeliever and the children began we cannot escape the difficulties of the verse by supposing that their holiness is only potential and to be realised in the future; for Paul the holiness is already in existence.

Is there then any way in which holiness can be seen as capable of being transferred from one person to another? A solution is probably to be found in the coming together of two ideas from two different thought worlds, both of which are found in Paul. The first is that of 'holiness' as we have sketched it; the other is the sense of the inter-relatedness of people which was felt more keenly then than now in our western culture. This idea, sometimes referred to as racial solidarity or corporate personality, is found in a number of different ways in Paul. It lies behind his teaching on the church as the body of Christ, on the dying and rising of believers with Christ (Rom. 6.3ff), on the involvement of all humanity in the disobedience of Adam. Although it is more difficult to point to actual instances of it in Paul in relation to the family it is found in contemporary Judaism. The clearest easily accessible example comes in Dan. 6.24 where not only are Daniel's accusers thrown into the lions' den but also their wives and children (it is foreign to our way of thinking to imprison the families of convicted criminals with them).

In this verse Paul then is influenced by two currents of thought, one associating holiness with people and the other viewing people as affecting one another by their actions and the way they live. Not choosing between these two currents but combining them he views the members of the family of the believer as affected by that believer's faith or baptism so that they in turn may be termed holy. The unbelieving spouse and the children became 'holy' when the believer was converted and continue to be so (hence the perfect tense). No objection can be offered here from 1 Cor. 6.15-17 where Paul teaches that a sexual liaison between a Christian and a prostitute may endanger, if not sever, the connection between the believer and Christ for the liaison with the prostitute is wrong in God's eyes while marriage is something which God has ordained. The discussion of 1 Cor. 7.3-5 shows that if Paul criticises sexual relations outside marriage he approves of sex within marriage.

That moral and spiritual qualities can in Paul's eyes be transferred from one person to another is not out of keeping with what he writes elsewhere. In 1 Cor. 12.26 he speaks of all the members of the church suffering and rejoicing when one of them suffers or rejoices. In 2 Cor. 1.3-7 he writes of his afflictions as comforting the Corinthians; seeing people suffer does not normally comfort others so the comfort must pass from Paul to the Corinthians in a way that seems mysterious to our Western eyes. In 2 Cor. 4.12 Paul says that while death is at work in him life appears in his readers, again not what we normally expect. Admittedly Paul in these cases envisages the transference of a spiritual quality from one member of the body of Christ to another member and not to an unbeliever but it shows that he can think of transference in quite a different way from what we do.

But why does Paul argue from the holiness of the child (v. 14b) to that of the unbelieving parent (v.



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14a)? It seems reasonable to assume that where both parents were believers they brought their children to Christian gatherings (the early church met in the homes of its members and children of the 'host' would surely always have been present) and that in some way the children were accepted by the community as 'holy'. In the case of a mixed marriage the believing parent probably also brought the children who would then be accepted as 'holy'. And if the children were holy, why then not also the unbelieving parent because of the solidarity of the family? So v. 14a follows from v. 14b.

Difficulties begin to appear once we attempt to apply this type of argument to church activity in our day. Society has a more individualistic attitude in respect of people so that the family is not as readily conceived as a cohesive unit as it was in Paul's day (the present divorce rate reflects the loss of belief in family coherence). Our more individualistic attitude derives in part from the Renaissance and in part from the Reformation, the latter with its emphasis on the necessity of personal belief. We thus find it difficult to view holiness as passing from a believing member of a family to the remainder of the family. However it is possible to argue that even in our much more individualised society we ought to recognise family solidarity. Supposing we did this to the extent of baptising the children or admitting them to communion where there was one believing parent ought we not also to baptise the unbelieving parent or admit that parent to communion? This is the logic of Paul's argument; he moves from the holiness of the children, not necessarily babies, to that of the unbelieving parent. If this passage is applied then either to baptism or to children as receiving communion ought we not to include the unbelieving parent where only one parent believes?

E. Best

The English translation used here has been the RSV.

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Apart from the standard commentaries help in understanding this verse can be obtained from

J Murphy-O'Connor, "Works without Faith in 1 Cor. VII,14", Revue Biblique, 84 (1977), pp. 349-61.

G. Delling, Studien zum Neuen Testament und zum Hellenistischen Judentum. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1950-1968 (ed F. Hahn, T. Holtz, N. Walter), Göttingen, 1970, pp. 257-88.

J.M. Ford, "Hast thou tithed thy Meal?" and "Is thy Child Kosher?" (1 Cor. x.27ff and 1 Cor. vii, 14', JTS, 17 (1966), pp. 76-9.

J. Blinzler, "Zur Auslegung von 1 Kor 7.14" in Neuestestamentliche Aufsätze (FS Josef Schmid, ed J. Blinzler, O. Kuss, F. Mussner), Regensburg, 1963, pp. 23-41.

J. Jeremias, Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries, London, 1960, pp. 44-8.

G.R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism in the New Testament, London, 1963, pp.192-9.

G. Walter, "Übergreifende Heiligkeit und Kindertaufe im Neuen Testament", EvTh 25 (1965), pp. 668-74

J.C. O'Neill, "I Corinthians 7.14 and Infant Baptism" in L'Apôtre Paul (ed A. Vanhoye), Leuven, 1986, pp.357-61.



# Divination by Dreams in Ugaritic Literature and in the Old Testament.

A. Jeffers

Numerous dreams are related in the Old Testament, and great attention is given to them as they are considered to be communications from the divinity, as Nb 12:6 shows<sup>2</sup>. Dreams seem to have been a recognized way of consulting the divinity (1 Sam 28:6) and then fell into disrepute along with most of the means used by man to consult God's will (Dt 13:1-5 threatens the death penalty for any spurious "dreamer of visions"). Therefore dreams can be "received" by both ordinary people and by cult specialists, prophets and kings (their passive attitude is thus emphasised in this case) or dreams can be specifically sought in situations of extreme necessity<sup>3</sup>.

## 1. SEARCH FOR A TYPOLOGY OF MANTIC DREAMS

Various types of dreams are recorded in the Old Testament giving rise to different typologies. A distinction between "message dreams" including "political divination" and "apocalyptic dreams" has

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<sup>1</sup> Mendelsohn, "Dream", IDB vol.1, p.868; cf. Gen 40:8; 41:6

<sup>2</sup> J.Gray, Numbers, (ICC: Edinburgh, 1903) p.124.

<sup>3</sup> Such is the case for the few real incubation-dreams we have access to in the Northwest Semitic world. For instance, the dream of Keret is sought for after the king's seven sons die leaving no heir to the throne; also in the case of Daniel in the Aqhat tablet, the lack of a son drives him to undergo a complex incubation ritual. 1 Kgs 3 in the Old Testament may not be at first sight a case of emergency but what is asked by Solomon is of prime importance for the survival of the kingdom: the art of government (v.9). May we add also 1 Sam 28:8 which seems to be one of the means of consultation set at the disposal of men.

been made;<sup>4</sup> Oppenheim stated that dream experiences were recorded on "three clearly differentiated planes":-

- i) dreams as revelations of the deity;
- ii) dreams which reflect symptomatically, the state of mind, the spiritual and bodily "health" of the dreamer;
- iii) the mantic dreams in which forthcoming events are prognosticated;

Lastly, we will mention Ehrlich's typology which includes:

- i) incubation dreams;
- ii) symbolic dreams;
- iii) commands and directions which God communicates through dreams.

#### i) The "Simple" Message Dream

In this case "announcements are delivered in plain language" either directly<sup>8</sup>, or by taking elements of everyday life<sup>9</sup>. These dreams are not necessarily mantic, although they might contain threats<sup>10</sup> which would come through if the message is not taken. Thus we will take the message dream in its wider sense: mantic is

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<sup>4</sup>B.Kilborne, "Dreams", Ency. Rel. vol. 4, p.482.

<sup>5</sup>A.L. Oppenheim, The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, Transactions of the American Philosophical society, vol.46, pt 3 (1956),p. 184ff.

<sup>6</sup>E.Ehrlich, "Der Traum im Alten Testament", BZAW 13 (1953).

<sup>7</sup>Mendelsohn, op.cit. , p.868

<sup>8</sup>For instance Gen 20:3; 31:11-24.

<sup>9</sup>Gen 37:5ff involving "sheaves".

<sup>10</sup>Gen 20:3ff.



that which is is "brought to pass" (Gen 41:32). This type of dream is dreamt by the Israelites and is self-explanatory, i.e., it does not need the help of a professional interpreter to understand it.

## ii) Symbolic Dreams

These also contain an insight into the future but they can be solved by professional interpreters only. In the Old Testament, this type of dream is reserved for the "Gentiles"<sup>11</sup>. Examples are the cases of the dreams of the chief butler and of the chief baker (Gen 40) or of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2). In the same category, the dream of the Midianite is found (Jdg 7:13).

## iii) Incubation Dreams

These are dreams which are stimulated through the use of a particular ritual<sup>12</sup>. The main condition it seems is that the subject spends the night at a "holy" place. We would add that incubation<sup>13</sup> is a phenomenon<sup>14</sup> which can be experienced spontaneously or artificially<sup>14</sup>. The ritual

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<sup>11</sup>Oppenheim, op.cit., p.207

<sup>12</sup>L.Deubner cited by Ehrlich, op.cit., p.13 gives a definition of incubation: "In deorum templis ad dormiendum se prosternabant, quia certis ritibus atque caere moniis effectis animoque bene praeparato atque prorsus in res divinas converso verisimillimum erat illum per somnium apparituum esse deum in cuius temple incubant". We have to keep in mind that this definition derives from the Greek attitude to uses of incubation. It relates here the rituals connected principally to the shrine of Asklepios in Epidauros.

<sup>13</sup>Samuel (1 Sam 3); Jacob (Gen 28:10ff)

<sup>14</sup>Solomon in 1 Kgs 3; also Isaac in Beer-Sheba (Gen 28:24f). Perhaps also the anonymous psalmist in Ps 91;

is performed in order to ask for something<sup>15</sup>. In the case of incubation dreams, the mantic element lies in the communication made by the divinity, in the confirmation that what has been asked for will come to pass, as in the wisdom of government required by Solomon, the wife and heir by Keret and the perfect son by Daniel.

## 2. MANTIC DREAMS IN UGARITIC LITERATURE AND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

### 1) The Simple Message Dream

One dream which illustrates this category is to be found in (Gen 37:5ff) in which Joseph dreams that he was binding sheaves with his brothers and that his sheaves "arose and stood upright" while his brothers' sheaves "bowed down" to his (v.7), the dream recurs and this time the "sun, the moon and eleven stars were bowing down" to Joseph (v.9). This passage is from the Elohist's source<sup>16</sup> and the content is fairly clear: Joseph is informed of his own destiny<sup>17</sup>. The dream is a prognostication of the future<sup>18</sup>. The reaction of Joseph's brothers might suggest, as Pedersen puts it, that "a man is responsible for his dreams.... Dreams are

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in Ugaritic literature this seems to be the case in the dreams of Keret and Daniel.

<sup>15</sup> Solomon is asking for the wisdom of government, the psalmist for deliverance, in later Greek sources, people sleep in sanctuaries to obtain healing (cf. 12 above).

<sup>16</sup> J. Skinner, Genesis, (ICC: Edinburgh, 1930) p. 445

<sup>17</sup> A. Caquot, "Les songes et leur interpretation", in Sources Orientales, vol. 2 (Paris: ed. du Seuil, 1959), p. 114

<sup>18</sup> Ehrlich, op. cit., p. 122



realistic and if they are indeed true and fixed, then the contents must also some day project themselves in outer events....Through his dreams Joseph has become a potential ruler, and some day this potentiality will be fulfilled, unless it is extirpated"<sup>19</sup>.

So, this passage shows us that dreams are understood to contain in themselves their own fulfilment.

ii) The symbolic dream. This dream also carries a message but needs an interpreter. It is dreamt by Gentiles. In Gen 40:9ff, two officials of Pharaoh's court who were made destitute through the loss of their respective occupations, tell their dream to Joseph. Although the scene happens in Egypt there is no Egyptian detail. Caquot thinks that, as the narrative is told to an Israelite audience, the rules of interpretation of dreams applied by Joseph are not Egyptian, but reflect the divinatory art of dream interpretation as it was in Israel<sup>20</sup>. The symbolism of both dreams is quite clear as both the chief baker and the chief butler see themselves acting in their normal function. The chief butler (v.9-11) acts normally, the chief baker is somehow prevented from fulfilling his function (v.16-17). The skill of Joseph consists of finding a meaning for the number three ("three branches"; "three cake baskets" ); "the three branches are three days" (v.12) "the three baskets are three days" (v.18) in three days the chief butler will be

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<sup>19</sup> J. Pedersen, Israel, its Life and Culture (London: Cumberlege, 1926) Joseph's brothers want him out of the way in order "to prevent the persistence of the dreams or, what comes to the same thing, they prevent his soul from carrying through its claim to unfold itself according to its nature". Against him, see Ehrlich, p.122f., who thinks that the psychic origins of dreams are unknown to the Old Testament.

<sup>20</sup> Caquot, op.cit., p.112

re-established in his charge, in three days the chief baker will be put to death.

The same can be said about Gen 41, Pharaoh's double dream. The symbolism is quite obvious, especially for agricultural people: the fat cows symbolise prosperity, the gaunt ones, famine. The number seven gives the key to the interpretation of the dream (seven cows = seven years).

Nebuchadnezzar's dream, interpreted by Daniel (Dan 2) , also contained a prediction for the future. In his analysis of the king's dream, Daniel relates each part of the statue to its symbolic political significance. The different types of metals from which the statue is made provide the clue to the reading of the political future of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

From these three stories several elements emerge-  
- from a purely literary point of view there is a pattern common to dreams (setting of the dream, information about who experiences it, when, under what circumstances,<sup>22</sup> the content of the dream itself, its fulfilment).

- dreams are understood to be a communication from God.
- the content of the dreams represents things which are of personal concern to the dreamers.
- As to the material of the dreams, it originates in the surroundings of the dreamers (even the composite statue of Dan 2)

Jdg 7:13-14, also a symbolic dream received by Gentiles, differs slightly from the above pattern. Here

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<sup>21</sup> J.A Montgomery, The Book of Daniel (ICC, Edinburgh, 1927) p.185ff. We should note also the dependency of Daniel on Joseph's story.

<sup>22</sup> Oppenheim, op.cit., p.186ff



neither God nor angel is concerned and the content of the dream is not taken from everyday life. Also this is the only symbolic dream to be found outside the Josph tradition.

RSV: "Behold, I dreamed a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian, and came to the tent, and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat". (v.14) And his comrade answered, "this is no other than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel, into his hand God has given Midian and all the host."

This dream was dreamt by a Midianite soldier, interpreted by an anonymous soldier friend of his. They were both overheard by Gideon who understands the scene as an omen of his future victory over the Midianites<sup>23</sup>. Returning to the camp, Gideon prepares for an immediate attack and wins the battle. Whether the dream is understood as a form of cledonomanancy (Gideon by chance hears this dream when obviously preoccupied by the war against the Midianites) as Guillaume proposes, or as a sign in itself ("the Midianites lack the strength of victory; their soul is inferior, a soul of defeat, and therefore it must create dreams of defeat, whereas victory is created in the soul of Gideon") as suggested by Pedersen<sup>24</sup> is debatable. If we see the dream from an Israelite's perspective, the dream was sent by God to the Midianites as a warning.

The dreams reveal several things. The story shows that any dream can be interpreted as an omen. Dreams of political significance are not reserved exclusively for

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<sup>23</sup>A. Guillaume, Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938) p. 214.

<sup>24</sup>Pedersen, op.cit., p. 138

men in power (potential or not). The symbolism again is, after all, quite clear: the cake of barley bread represents the peasants, the tent the nomads. Furthermore, there is possibly a word play on lehem, "bread" and the root lhm, "to do battle", as Caquot suggests<sup>25</sup>. So we are faced in Jdg 7:13-14 with a unique example of popular interpretation based on wordplay.

Lastly, we will examine the symbolic dream of the Ugaritic god, El, which also suggests a belief in the "truthfulness" of dreams and in their prognostic value for the future.

KTU 1.6 I 4-9: El's dream:

b hlm . ltpn . il . d pid

b drt . bnv . bnwt

šmm . šm\*n . tmtrn

nhlm . tlk . nbtm

w id' . k hy . aliyn . b\*"l\*

k it . zbl . b'l . ars

De Moor translates:

"in a dream of the Benevolent, Ilu the good-natured,

in a vision of the Creator of creatures

the heavens will rain oil

the wadis will run with honey

and I will know that Ba'lu the Almighty is alive,  
that his Highness, the Lord of earth, exists".<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Caquot, op.cit., p.112

<sup>26</sup>J. De Moor, An Anthology of Religious Texts from Ugarit (Leiden: Brill, 1987) 91

The goddess Anat returns to El and announces that Mot is no more. She invites El to have a dream in order to discover whether or not Baal can come back to life. If El sees the heavens raining oil and the wadis running with honey then she will know that Baal is alive. El has his dream and sees the signs that Anat desires him to see: nature is plentiful again and accordingly Baal, god of fertility, is alive<sup>27</sup>. This poem was probably part of a religious drama setting the rhythm of rainy seasons with dry ones<sup>28</sup>, and in this case it is a poetic figure of speech. But, on the other hand, this figure of speech would not have been understood by the audience if the idea that dreams can uncover the future was not already accepted. We should also note that as against Jdg 13, the Ugaritic text assumes that not everybody can have mantic dreams, not even goddesses: only El, head of the Ugaritic Pantheon, can dream such dreams. As in the Old Testament, there seems to be a "monopoly" of mantic dreams, with a difference: the Old Testament God, being less accessible than El, more remote, sends mantic dreams to people chosen by him for this purpose<sup>29</sup>. In some ways he is also in control of them.

### iii) Incubation Dreams

This is, as we have already said, a way to become the recipient of a message dream. This can happen spontaneously by spending the night in a holy place for instance, or it can be induced artificially. There are several examples of the induced incubation dream in

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<sup>27</sup>cf. Gibson, Canaanite Myths and Legends (Edinburgh: T&T Clarke, 1978), p.17; see also C.H. Gordon, "The Poetic Literature of Ugarit", Or 12 (1943), p.38

<sup>28</sup>Caquot, op.cit., p.104

<sup>29</sup>F.Schmidtke, "Träume, Orakel, und Totengeister als Kunder der Zukunft in Israel und Babylonien" BZ 11 (1967) p.242



both Ugaritic literature and the Old Testament and we will now analyse them in order to find a possible recognisable pattern. The mantic element is contained in the message transmitted by the divinity to the dreamer.

KTU 1.14, I, 26ff: The dream of Keret:

(1.26) "He (Krt) entered his bedroom, he wept,  
repeating his angry cries, shedding tears.  
His tears poured forth  
like shekels to the ground  
like pieces of one fifth on his bed.  
While he was weeping, he fell asleep,  
while he was shedding, slumber (came),  
sleep overpowered him and he lay down,  
slumber (came) and he curled up.  
And in his dream Ilu descended,  
in his vision the Father of Man,  
and he approached the questioning Kirtu".<sup>30</sup>

Keret has lost his seven sons and there is no heir left to the throne. In what appears to be an incubation dream<sup>31</sup>, Keret asks El for descendants. El gives him precise instructions: Keret must wash and sacrifice, and then prepare an expedition in order to ask the king for Pabil's daughter, Huray, in marriage. Keret should tell Pabil that Huray was given to him and that she bears him offspring in the dream (III, 46-51).

In this passage we are faced with two problems:

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<sup>30</sup>Translation by de Moor, p.193

<sup>31</sup>I.Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the Ancient Near East (Oxford:B.Blackwell,1967) p.151: cf.also Caquot, p.105. Against them see Ottosson, חלם, hālam, TWAT, vol.2,col.987f. who does not think incubation took place (Keret is in his room, not in a temple).

whether or not it is an incubation scene and what the relationship is between what happens in the dream and its future development. We do not think that incubation has to be taken too strictly, in that the dream must take place necessarily at a sanctuary. In any case we do not know for sure where the scene is happening but we would consider a king's dwelling to be an appropriate place. The weeping of Keret may have been induced and remind us of ritual weeping in times of crisis for the community<sup>32</sup>. In this case it is provoked and may be part of an incubation ritual<sup>33</sup>. As to the relationship between what happens in the dream and the future events, it seems that the desire for an heir is rooted by the dream, is part of him and so is brought about in future events.

A much clearer Ugaritic text about incubation rituals is to be found in KTU 1.17.I.1ff, the "dream" of Daniel in the Aqhat text<sup>34</sup>. Daniel, a chief or patriarch, undergoes a seven day rite of incubation in the hope of obtaining a son: Daniel after offering drink<sup>35</sup> and food<sup>36</sup> to "the gods" (1.3 and 4) "besprinkles

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<sup>32</sup>J.Gray, The KRT Text in the Literature of Ras Shamra: a Social Myth of Ancient Canaan, (Leiden: Brill, 1964)

p. 34

<sup>33</sup>The rites to be accomplished after the dream (washing and sacrificing) may also be post-incubation rituals. G.Obermann "How Daniel was blessed with a son" JAOS, suppl. 6 (1946) p. 10, n.13.

<sup>34</sup>We should note here that the word hlm does not appear in the text.

<sup>35</sup>cf.Obermann, op.cit., p. 8-9.

<sup>36</sup>ibid.

his cubicle", "his clothes"<sup>37</sup> (1.5-6) and goes to sleep<sup>38</sup>. The ritual also involves a prayer<sup>39</sup> "supplication". This was performed during the offering and repeated for six days. Daniel asks for a perfect son and requests the gods to intercede in his favour. El gives him a favourable response (1.48-71): Daniel's sterility will be cured (1.48-57) and a model son will be given to him (1.58-71).

We have here a much more elaborate pattern of:

- i) sacrificial offering;
- ii) purification (?) of the dwelling;
- iii) going to sleep;
- iv) intercession;
- v) fulfilment of the dream.

This pattern is to be found in 1 Kgs 3 (Solomon at Gideon). This text, according to Ehrlich,<sup>40</sup> is the only case of incubation in the Old Testament. Although we would not completely agree with that statement (other texts contain elements which can be identified as incubation rituals)<sup>41</sup>, the narrative of 1 Kgs 3 certainly

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<sup>37</sup> Sprinkling of blood, of oil, of water, was used in the rituals of the Hebrews for a variety of purposes (expiation, purification, promotion of cultic person...)

<sup>38</sup> Of the four verbs involved, three are clear and common: y'l, "he goes up"; (v.3) to his bed; y'skb<sup>v</sup>, "he lies down, he sleeps", yln, "he retires for the night". cf. Obermann, op.cit., p.9

<sup>39</sup> ibid. p.10; on the idea that Daniel uses a magical ritual see H.P.Muller, "Magisch-Mantisch Weisheit und die Gestalt Daniels", UF 1 (1969) pp 90-94 in particular.

<sup>40</sup> Ehrlich, op.cit., p.55

<sup>41</sup> Gen 46:1-5 deals with a night vision; Gen 15:1-6, Abraham receives a divine word but no sacrifice has



exhibits the complete pattern put forward in KTU 1.17.  
RSV (v.4): "And the king went to Gideon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings upon that altar (v.5). At Gideon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said "Ask what I shall give you". To God then Solomon asked for an "understanding mind to govern the people" (v.9) and that was granted to him.

(v.5): And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants."

We have got:

- (i) the sacrificial element - (v.4)
- (ii) the emphasis on the setting of the scene at night time - (v.5);
- (iii) the apparition of the divinity followed by an intercession - (v.5,9)
- (iv) the fulfilment - (v.12)
- (v) conclusion of the dream ("behold it was a dream") - (v.15)

In fact, biblical dreams located at sanctuaries (Beersheba, Bethel, Shiloh) "doubtless had connexion

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been performed in Hebrew. Ehrlich dismisses the fact that Psalms may contain allusions to incubation, in particular Ps 3:6;4:9;63:3. Although we agree in these cases, we think it possible that Ps 91 contains an allusion to it. In fact, yitloman can be translated by "spending the night in order to obtain something". That is the opinion of Caquot, *Le Psaume XCI, Semitica* 8 (1958), p.25, whose opinion we share: "le fidèle passe la nuit pour provoquer le songe, c'est le procédé bien connu de l'incubation."

with a ritual praxis that induced such phenomena"<sup>42</sup>. This last dream story to be recorded is very clear; no interpreter is needed, it is a direct communication from the deity.

From the three preceding cases we can infer a number of facts about incubation.

The precondition for the incubation is the belief in the reality of the dream. Dreaming at a holy place is necessary for the incubation, (or in a special place like the palace of a king). Incubation is therefore a dream revelation which the person attains at a holy place. This person is not thus expected to wait passively for the transcendent world to connect with him; he can actively seek contact with it. through incubation, the person looks for concrete assistance through the powerful being or the godhead, particularly for healing, teaching or prophecy<sup>43</sup>. Spending some time in the holy shrine which is seen as the dwelling place of God or of an empowered being was appropriate for contact with the power whose assistance the person wanted to secure, especially since he accepted that the workings of this power were linked to certain shrines. The necessary incubation rituals had as their objective impelling the divinity to appear.

The introduction of rites and the subsequent ceremonies, as well as the manner in which the divinity appeared, and the form and content of the oracles could all be most diverse. Purification rituals, fasting..., various forms of sacrifice, special preparation of a sleeping place, use of special vestments, prayer, self-mortification and ritual weeping were used as preparations. Where the preparatory rites are clearly

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<sup>42</sup>J. Montgomery, The Books of Kings (ICC: Edinburgh, 1951) p.105.

<sup>43</sup>Ehrlich, op.cit., p.13f

for the purpose of cleansing the soul of the body's impurities, as well as the establishment of good relations between the divinity and the individual, the closing ceremonies represent a thanksgiving for the appearance of the god who showed himself to be sympathetic. Perhaps also, the person wished to show the god, through the closing ceremonies, that he would adhere to the oracle which had been announced in the dream.

However, the person can also behave passively during the incubation as the two following texts will show:

Gen 28: The dream of Jacob at Bethel.

On his way to Haran, Jacob spends the night at a shrine which he came upon by chance. The sacredness of the place is revealed to him<sup>44</sup> by a dream of a ladder leading from earth to heaven. So in this case we are not to look for a preparatory phase. But the other elements of the incubation are present:

i) the insistence on the night setting ("when he had reached a certain place he passed the night there, since the sun had set" (v11a));

ii) the location in a sacred place ("taking one of the stones to be found at that place, he made it his pillow and lay down where he was" (v11b)); according to

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<sup>44</sup> Skinner, Genesis, p. 375 This section consists of a complete Elohist narrative, with a Yahwistic insertion (v 13-16). therefore the structure of this dream is more complex: the oral communication of God to Jacob is accompanied by the perception of a different picture, cf. E. Otto, "Jacob in Bethel", ZAW 88 (1976) p. 165-190



Skinner the stone itself is the abode of the deity<sup>45</sup>;

iii) the dream oracle ("I will give to you and to your descendants the land in which you are lying" (v14));

iv) the post-incubation ritual ("pouring oil over the top of the monument" (v18), "I will pay a tenth part of all you gave me" (v22)0.

1 Sam 3: A dream oracle or a dream theophany?

Samuel, while sleeping in the sanctuary at Shiloh, hears a voice calling him. the voice proves to be the voice of Yahweh who reveals his determination to destroy the house of Eli<sup>46</sup>. Although the word dream is not to be found in the passage, it seems that the setting is that of a dream. The elements composing the narrative are those of a spontaneous "auditory message dream"<sup>47</sup> but the setting suggests an incubation in a shrine: (v 2); and a dream oracle is given (v 11-14). Sleeping regularly in a shrine probably enabled Samuel to participate unconsciously in the holiness of the place. Being a child and therefore more open to influences, he is the perfect recipient of a dream-oracle.

Finally, Daniel, the "wise interpreter of dreams", has to be mentioned, (Dan 2) but as Collins remarked<sup>48</sup>, "the emphasis falls on the wisdom of Daniel and his God; the actual content of the dream-interpretation is

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<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p. 376

<sup>46</sup> H. Smith, Samuel, (ICC:Edinburgh, 1899) p. 25ff.

<sup>47</sup> R. Gnuse, "A Reconsideration of the Form-Critical Structure in 1 Samuel 3: An Ancient Near Eastern Dream Theophany", ZAW (1982) p. 388.

<sup>48</sup> J. J. Collins, "The Court-Tales in Daniel and the Development of Apocalyptic", JBL 94 (1975) p. 220.

relatively disregarded". In fact the dream is unimportant; what is, is the form in which Daniel's apocalyptic message is cast.

### 3. CONCLUSION

All of the different categories of dreams we have examined have a number of common features: the underlying belief is that dreams are a reality, and that communication with the deity can be established artificially or spontaneously through them. In any case there seems to be a monopoly of dream-sending by only one god (spirits...do not send dreams). The dreams thus sent are mostly of a divinatory character. The last dream narrated in the Old Testament, 1 Kgs 3, is an incubation dream and we already mentioned that incubation is linked with holy places. With the Deuteronomic reform many of the local traditions linked with the shrines were suppressed and lost. Thus it happens that in the period after Dt, the dream loses its revelatory character<sup>49</sup> and moreover becomes contrasted to true prophecy<sup>50</sup>. Incubation was finally regarded as a heathen ritual belonging to alien gods and cults,<sup>50</sup> against which the Old Testament makes such a firm stand<sup>50</sup>. According to the view of those groups which oppose this heathen element in Judah and Israel, there is no definite time and form for divine manifestation. Nor has man the opportunity of calling forth God, through whatever procedure, be it prayer, sacrifice or special technique.

A. Jeffers

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<sup>49</sup>Jer 23:25-32; 27:9; cf. also Dt 13:1-6

<sup>50</sup>Isa 65:4

## Bread and Body ; Semantics and Infrastructure

David J Templeton

On the night on which he was  
betrayed the Lord Jesus took bread  
and, after giving thanks, he broke  
it and said "this is my body,  
broken for you". (1 Cor Ch 11).

God communicates directly and distinctly to humanity in the paradox of the life, death, resurrection and promised return of Jesus Christ. But it is in the incarnational event of the eucharistic feast celebrated by the *communitas sanctorum* Jesus Christ can be stated unequivocally. The eucharistic action is comprised of two indissoluble distinct segments of identity, both of which are essential for correct eucharistic celebration - *verbum et factum* - word and existential reality. The former is represented by the eucharistic declarations "this is my body" and "this is my blood" and the latter the physical substances of bread and wine to which these declarative statements refer.

The symbolic representation of the bread and wine of any individual eucharistic event is linked to the original celebration of the Last Supper before the crucifixion. In the same manner the words of consecration uttered in any specific celebration of eucharist are the identical words of the original eucharist. They are the same words uttered by Christ, for the event is the eschatological event of the kingdom of the risen and victorious Christ, the heavenly banquet feast of the Lamb. In the same manner these words are spoken with eternal identity and sense as the banquet invitation of the risen Christ. These words also are the words of Christ, for it is he alone who may say 'this is my body', and so any repeat of them during the eucharistic celebration can only be



an echo of their first being spoken, on that night before Calvary.

The words "this is my body" and "this is my blood" are thus linked with the identity of Christ himself. They must, in some sense, access the divine identity and presence of Christ as he is to be realised in the eucharistic sacrament. This cannot be a return to a sacrificial notion of the sacramental event. The bread and wine, and the words themselves, are not, and cannot be construed as instruments which re-sacrifice Christ bloodlessly, as was believed by earlier generations of Roman Catholic priests<sup>1</sup>, neither are the words a cabalistic incantation which require divine response without deferment. The words, however, as the Reformers emphasised, are of vital importance and have direct symbolic reference to the eucharistic reality of Christ.

Like temporality and subjectivity,  
spaciality is a necessary product  
is a necessary product of enunciation.  
Speaking generates spatialization and  
with it the sense of a world  
'inside' language (or text) and the  
world which precedes or stands  
outside the text.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Current theological belief tends towards the idea that the sacrificial aspects of former Catholic theological writing was meant to indicate participation in the original crucifixion and not a re-enactment of that event, but belief of the time clearly became involved with the "Mass as sacrifice" aspects of the eucharistic event, generally to the exclusion of other aspects.

<sup>2</sup> Gary A. Phillips, "This is a Hard Saying, Who Can be a Listener to it? Creatign a Reader in John 6," in Semeia 26 (1983) 23-56; p.35.

So within the eucharistic celebration the enunciation of the memorial words of the eucharist encapsulate the space for eucharistic celebration. Just as the actions of worship have sanctified the temporal space of the liturgical action, the eucharistic words of Christ transform the world view of the participants, echoing their awareness of qualitative time in the midst of the socio-temporal location of quantitative time, into one focused reality of the broken bread of the crucified Christ. The words become vehicles of mediation which bypass simple intellectual comprehension to give meaning to the person by their symbolic energy. The person can thus clearly understand the reality of the eucharistic event, without necessarily comprehending it structurally or scientifically. The event is purely a word event and as such effects structural change on the symbols of reality. Thus Christ is really present in the eucharist, but present scientific research would be unable to identify his presence.

The confusion of comprehension created by this form of divine communication may be compared to the misunderstanding of the Pharisees to the identity claim made by Christ, recorded in John Chapter 6, where Jesus declares himself to be "living bread".

The text of John 6 moves progressively towards identifying Jesus with true bread, true sustenance, which had previously only been found in the letter of Torah. The dynamic of the text is to reveal to us as the reader the significant clue which was missing for the participants in the narrative and to receive the connection of Christ in the bread of the eucharist; it is a demand that the participants in the eucharist be aware of the significance of the symbol of bread and not simply the physical nature of it. We are also shown, as reader, the true nature of the divine food. In this discourse the listener if invited to be one of

the initiated, and to be aware of the true and inner meaning of the event, by offering the reader a form of specialised knowledge:

the selection of a listener has already been made. Thus we could almost say that the discourse has programmed and chosen (or at least laid out the program for choosing) its own listener.

In the same way the eucharistic claim made by the Apostle Paul about those who, because of their inability to recognise the presence of the Body of Christ, eat and drink damnation to themselves is related to being made aware of the significance of the identity of the symbols of bread and wine as the actual presence of Christ, and as such also symbols of the presence of Christ within the *communias sanctorum*. The enunciative act of the eucharistic words has the effect of establishing the identity of the person, and the community, who are thus addressed by Christ himself.

This passage in John 6 bears other echoes of the Pauline passage mentioned above. It is clear that a eucharistic comprehension is acting within the structure of this passage, whether based on the whole of the Corinthian passage or the common root from which it may have sprung. It raises the same issues which are prevalent in attempting to understand the eucharistic celebration.

At this point [6: 35-48] it is still possible to hear Jesus metaphorically

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<sup>3</sup> Op.Cit.p.51



... 6: 51-52 and 6:57 already go beyond this by insisting outside metaphorical tolerances that the bread, which is Jesus, must be eaten. But it is the inner core of 6: 53-56 that makes it clear that something beyond metaphor is happening. In a formulaic, hypnotic, and almost rhapsodic repetition the phrases, Eat/Flesh/Drink/Blood, move the Discourse beyond any interpretation of merely <sup>4</sup>accepting (eating) the Revealer.

The reality of the transformation of the simple elements of bread and wine into the real presence of the body of Christ is never to be interpreted as mere metaphor for the enfleshment of the divine Logos, but to engage the person, and, through the individual, the community in a real and transformative encounter with the presence of God. That is why Zwingli was so wrong in his interpretation of the eucharist as only an empty sign of the presence of Christ, he had lost the imperative reality of the word.

By the utterance of the communion phrases "this is my body" and "this is my blood", the worship leader creates a transformation in the very fabric of human existence for it is the creation by the word of another state of existence which infuses the socio-temporal space in which the words are uttered as an integral part of the eucharistic memorial. The worship leader speaks the words but they are uttered not by any human mouth alone, they are the words of divine condescension uttered by Christ alone in the

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<sup>4</sup> John Dominic Crossan, "It is Written: A Structural Analysis of John 6," Semeia 26 (1983) 3-21; p.15.

eternal reality of the banquet of the kingdom. That is why the actual vocalisation of the phonemes of the original speech are unimportant. The eucharistic words echo from the mouth of Christ in the many languages of the world, and in many semantic shapes, as are appropriate to the individual community who gather for worship, yet they are always the same words of sacrifice and celebration. It is important that the words of sacrifice and celebration. It is important that the words of consecration act as such to individual communities, but it is inessential to ape archaic verbal structures, or structures and languages which are resonant with the remembrance of oppressive imperialism.

The acceptance of the broken body of Christ is a commitment by the community to share in the brokenness of Christ.

Jesus is announcing there [6: 51-58] that to accept him is to accept the one who must die, who must die by the violent separation of body and blood, that is, as we shall only know later, by crucifixion. But it also is to insist that acceptance is the only way that acceptance will ever after be possible. In other words: I am always the one to be consumed... Thus the primary function of the eucharistic language is to indicate the split in eucharistic understanding, that is, in the permanent acceptance of crucifixion among the Disciples, Jesus must always be accepted as the Crucified One.

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<sup>5</sup> Crossan Op.Cit.p.16.

The community of disciples are the same eucharistic community who are committed to share in the Lord's death, to be willing themselves to be involved in the suffering of the world to bring it into the redemptive relationship with the divine bread of life, Christ. The emphasis upon the brokenness of the bread in eucharist is the crucifixion of Christ alone is the redemptive medium, and that as the community of his body we share in the suffering of that act. That is why the eucharistic community are reminded in the celebration of the Lord's Supper that they "show forth" the Lord's death, in the sacramental reality of the physical elements of bread and wine, but also in their identity as the bread of Christ.

The word of consecration finds itself enfleshed again in the community, as the Body of Christ, and as it is enfleshed the word recreates the reality of the crucifixion within that body, so that the suffering of the oppressed and the poor have ultimate meaning and so that the Church, as the body of Christ, recognise their identity as crucified.

This word is double tongued for as it speaks of eucharist as crucifixion, it is also the word of eucharist as eschaton. The community who offer themselves to be crucified, in the crucifixion of Christ, and in the suffering of the divided Christian body, also receive the reality of the accomplished kingdom of God and the eternal resurrection of the kingdom community.

The word always seeks, and perhaps must always seek, embodiment within the material structure of the universe. It is to be found within the sacrament of eucharist in the community who are present at any one socio-temporal location, and in the essential sacramental elements. In eucharist these physical expressions of the word are bread and wine, the elements chosen by Christ as representative of his body and



blood.

The establishment of Christianity in certain Asian communities by the Jesuit missionary movement meant that the sacrament was celebrated with European wine, specially imported from the wine growing areas of Western Europe at vast expense to the local community, but the only alternative is to use locally produced rice wine, or sake. The question is then raised concerning the validity of a sacrament which has changed the sacramental symbols. In Protestant churches many have replaced wine with a non-alcoholic grape juice or even other substitute soft drinks which are unrelated to wine. This is often not regarded as having serious or important significance.

However, this concern with the substitution of similar sacramental elements has vital significance for the issues of symbolic realism. We could dismiss this issue by suggesting that, like the language used within eucharist, the physical representation of the sacramental symbols is irrelevant, and that the celebration of eucharist alone is significant, whatever the elements used to represent the body and blood of Christ, even if these were coffee and donuts! But this would be to ignore the deeper significance of the symbolic realism of the eucharistic event.

Just as the word declared creates space which is recognisable as the divine presence, the bread and the wine of eucharist are connective to the Lord's Supper and Passover Meal, and their presence on the eucharistic table creates the eternal presence of the event which preceded the crucifixion. The symbols of bread and wine are clearly connected to the identity of the eucharistic kingdom of Christ. The fundamental identity of the elements is established by their first being defined by Christ as his body and blood, it is questionable whether the Church may significantly alter this primary definition. The symbols find their root

metaphor in Christ's crucifixion and death, to seek to change these metaphors is to change their symbolic dynamic. The significance of bread and wine is their continued identity with Christ. The structure of the kingdom of Christ finds its eschatological identity in the simple acts of eating and drinking, but its symbolic realism in the bread and wine; to fragment this by choosing to celebrate the sacrament with alternative elements is to alter the basic inherent structure and meaning of the event. It is to raise the issue of alternative symbols as equatable to the original symbols and one finds oneself in an infinite regress<sup>6</sup> and loss of meaning. As Thomas Merton has suggested<sup>6</sup> the eucharistic symbols must stand alone, and cannot be reduced further to illustrations of themselves as occurs when substitution of the original elements of bread and wine occur. The alteration of the elements for alternatives must be taken with extreme caution and be decided upon availability and socio-economic reasons alone.

It is, however, the existential presence of Christ which is important in the eucharist. The bread and wine communicate the presence of Christ, really and actually, among the community of faith. The presence of bread and wine is a declaration by the community concerning the symbolic nature of the structures of the universe. It is also a declaration of the reality of continued communication by God to his creation, the tactile nature of the elements reiterates the commitment by God to human flesh and to human suffering. The symbols of bread and wine declare the redemptive presence of Christ within the human infrastructure and create the inbreaking of God into

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Thomas Merton, "Absurdity in Sacred Decoration," in Disputed Questions (New York, Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1980) 250-259.

each specific example of that infrastructure.

Bread and wine are not simply vehicles to indicate the presence of God in human society, they are the creative medium of transformation of the symbolic presence of God, that is why to change them into other aspects of human existence is to rob them of their symbolic power - to make the wine innocuous grape juice, is to rob it of its symbolic power, that the blood of Christ has the power to intoxicate the minds and hearts of the Church. It is to alter the symbol with its referents and to deny the power of that symbol for us. To change casually the physical structure of the elements of the eucharist is to drastically change the symbolic communication which they embody. The act of changing the elements from bread and wine to other more easily obtainable elements in times of economic or social necessity or to rid them of oppressive overtones is to invest the eucharist with its inherent meaning and to recognise it as a declaration of redemption from suffering and oppression. Perhaps even in Western churches the replacement of wine with Japanese sake would be to re-establish the shock of eucharist and to reforge the lost chains of solidarity with the suffering in the Third World, giving the Western churches the opportunity to again recognise the crucified Christ in the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine, and to renew the full transformative dynamic of symbol within the eucharist.

God communicates to his people. That communication is in Christ alone, but is expressed to the eucharistic community through symbols earthed within human semantics and infrastructure. The words of Christ and the elements of bread and wine act as the communication of the dynamic reality of God by which the divine is mediated into the human world. It is essential that the community in turn are able to communicate this revelation to their society using the verbal and physical symbols of the eucharist in a valid



Templeton, **Bread and Body**, IBS 13, Sept 1990

manner so that the eucharistic words of Christ mean he is really present tō his world.

David J Templeton

An Introduction to Celtic Christianity edited by James P.Mackey, Edinburgh, T&T Clarke, 1989. pp.440 £19.95.

If readers approach this volume expecting an elementary account of the life of the Celtic Church in Ireland during its heyday from the sixth to the ninth centuries they will be disappointed. Instead, they will find a collection of essays covering aspects of Christian life in Ireland, Scotland and Wales up to the present day.

Two fine essays deal with the origin and outreach of the Celtic Church in Ireland. The first is on Saint Patrick and is by the late Richard Hanson, scholar and bishop; his digest of the studies carried out by himself and other scholars gives a clear picture of Patrick and his work in Ireland. The second is by the late Thomas O'Fiaich, scholar and Roman Catholic Primate of Ireland; he gives a graphic picture of the work of Irish missionaries who, following Columbanus, made their way to Europe and founded churches and monasteries; he claims that their work "was surely the greatest achievement of the Irish Church and people".

An essay by Prof.O'Donaghue deals with the hymn known as Patrick's Breastplate and available to us in the translations of Mrs C.F.Alexander and Prof. R.A.S.Macalister. This essay brings out the hymn's emphasis upon the glory of God, the majesty of his creation, the nearness of the eternal world and of the heavenly host, the menace of evil powers, and the victory of Christ and his presence with his people. These were central themes in Christian Celtic thought.

In the first of two essays on the Welsh strand of Celtic life, Prof.Glanmor Williams gives a splendidly concise account of the early centuries of Welsh Christian life; he moves on to deal with the absorption of the Welsh Church into the orbit of Canterbury in the time of the Normans; he then deals with the Reformation enacted by Henry VIII and he shows how, in the time of

Elizabeth, the work of William Salesbury and Bishops Richard Davies and William Morgan in translating the Bible into Welsh preserved the Welsh language for future generations. The second essay is by Dr Tudur Jones and gives a fine appreciation of the eighteenth-century awakening when Howel Harris and Daniel Rowland used the Welsh language to spread the Gospel and William Williams Pantycelyn used it for most of his hymns which became and still are the cream of the hymns used in all the Welsh Churches. This revival had features akin to the rapture of early Celtic Christianity and it had links with the Methodist movement. However, it took its own line and developed into the Presbyterian Church of Wales but it left its mark on all the Churches.

The Scottish scene is dealt with by Terence McCaughey, an Irish Presbyterian minister and a scholar learned in Celtic lore. He sketches Presbyterian Church life in the Highlands where Gaelic has been the language of worship, song and thought. He gives examples of Gaelic hymns and prayers with their haunting sense of the presence of God. Pagan, medieval and worldly ideas and customs were not easily swept away in the tide of Protestant reform, but in the aftermath of the crushing Jacobite risings and the clearance of the Highlands there came a new evangelical seriousness which made a religious experience of conversion an essential condition of church membership. This led to a rigorism under which only a few became communicants while others were counted as adherents. McCaughey ends with a stern personal forecast that "a de-Calvinised, de-Gaelicised Protestantism would seem set fair to be no more than the Hebridean branch of an English-speaking mid-Atlantic pietism".

Several essays deal with the literature of these Celtic areas. One deals with the arrival of Latin and its spread as the language of study and worship. It was used by the scribes of the Book of Kells, an amazing witness to the culture and calligraphic skills of the

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Irish monks. Another essay deals with the prayers and hymns written in Irish, while another deals with the Celtic commentaries on the scriptures. There is an essay on Celtic art which is full of interest and with many illustrations. Experts will likely regard this as an authoritative study.

A sortie into the realm of theology is made in an essay on Pelagius, who was probably Irish or Welsh. His defence of human freewill and responsibility roused the wrath of many people. Augustine had stressed human inability to choose to forsake evil or to do any good without divine grace. This had become the dominant teaching of the Church. In its light, Pelagius was rightly, and often, condemned as a heretical teacher. Yet, he raised deep questions which do not go away. This valuable essay ends with the assertion that "the thought of Pelagius, as transmitted by the Irish missionaries and their heirs, helped to inspire optimism and the belief that human nature had, by God's grace, the capacity for improvement".

There is an essay on James Joyce, the novelist, who rebelled against much of his inheritance; the writer thinks that if "Irish Catholicism, which has flooded the world with words, most of them of a vulgar order unworthy of the sublime verities they meant to communicate", could digest Joyce "with the necessary critical discrimination it might find the contemporary adult application of its precious heritage"! An essay on the poet, Sean O'Riordan, gives a critical account of how the poet's Christian outlook fits into the Celtic inheritance.

The editor of the book is James Mackey, Professor of Theology in Edinburgh University. In the introduction he claims that "no-one who does not come to grips with the nearness of the spirit world will ever understand Celtic Christianity": "the ubiquitous presence of the spiritual in all things and at all times" is a powerful, permanent and characteristic



Celtic conviction. The Celtic Christian at prayer was linked to the persons of the Trinity, to the angelic hosts and to the company of heaven, but there was also a sense of this world as the beautiful world to which Christ came to enable the light of God to shine for us again and guide our footsteps home.

Readers will find in this book things to be learned, things hard to grasp, things to be queried and things mysterious, but they may also be moved to join in the prayers and praises coming down the centuries from the Celtic past.

R. Buick Knox

Job 1-20 by David. J. A. Clines (Word Biblical Commentary 17. Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 501 + cxv pp. np.)

Few parts of the Old Testament present a greater challenge to the commentator than the book of Job. As Paul Claudel remarks, "De tous les livres de l'Ancien Testament, JOB est le plus sublime, le plus poignant, le plus hardi...le plus énigmatique, le plus décevant et...le plus rebutant." To comment on such a work requires tremendous dedication and perseverance, apart from a wide range of intellectual skills. While finally judgment must await the publication of the second volume on chapters 21-42, Professor Clines well deserves our admiration and gratitude for undertaking this daunting challenge.

At the outset Clines dismisses matters of Introduction as having little bearing on the interpretation of Job. His honesty is refreshing: "Of its author or date of composition I frankly know nothing, and my speculations are not likely to be worth more than the many guesses that already exist" (p. xxix). Consequently, by way of 'orientation' to Job he focuses initially on the book's Shape, Argument, and

Readings. While dismissing questions of authorship and date as of secondary importance, Clines still acknowledges the value of understanding the book's historical setting; he devotes some twenty-two pages to discussing this. Next, he provides a comprehensive bibliography running to fifty-three pages.

Several features of this 'orientation' deserve further comment. Firstly, the section on Argument was disappointing. In all only eleven pages are devoted to outlining the argument of the book, surprisingly little given the overall size of the commentary and the complexity of this issue. Secondly, the section on Readings reflects the inclination of some modern writers to place undue importance on the nature of the reader. Academic curiosity may prompt one to ask how a feminist, vegetarian or materialist reads Job, but such interest is surely of limited relevance for the vast majority of readers of Job. If the book has something to say on these or other '-isms', it is of only secondary importance in comparison to the major issues which the book addresses directly. The general aims of the series would surely have been better served by a fuller discussion of how a twentieth century Christian should approach this part of Scripture.

Such criticisms, however, should not detract from the immense erudition which Clines displays in his detailed treatment of the text. It is in here that readers, struggling with the text of Job, will value most his comments. We can but hope that the companion volume will not be long in appearing.

T.D. Alexander

The Gospels and Jesus by Graham H. Stanton, Oxford University Press, The Oxford Bible Series, 1989, pp 296.

This book provides an excellent introduction to the present day study of the gospels. Each of the chapters has its own bibliography of scholarly works to guide further reading. The book will be of value, not only to those about to embark on a study of the gospels, but also to those who already have some acquaintance with modern critical works.

The first part of the book is concerned with the distinctive features of each of the gospels as they tell the story of Jesus and reveal in so doing the significance which each evangelist attached to him. The accounts of the Lord's prayer in Matthew and Luke are carefully examined to show "Both the difficulties and fascination of serious study of the gospels."

There are useful introductions to form criticism, and redaction criticism. There is a short treatment of narrative criticism and if this seems less helpful than the comments on form and redaction criticism, the fault is probably not that of Professor Stanton. There is a fuller treatment of narrative criticism in the book in this series by Robert Morgan (Biblical Interpretation)

The second part of the book is mainly concerned with seeking to establish, as far as possible, the main features of the teaching and actions of Jesus. It shows that we must recognise that the evangelists have introduced modifications to the traditions, that they are largely responsible for their present contexts, and that, in their present form, some traditions reflect the concerns of the post-Easter period rather than those of the life time of Jesus. And we find that although Jesus is sometimes portrayed as a radical prophet, sometimes as a brilliant teacher, sometimes as an exorcist, he cannot be contained in any one of these categories.

There is a very useful chapter on The Kingdom of

God and, in addition to the chapters concerned particularly with Jesus, there is a chapter on John the Baptist in which it is stressed that in the fourth gospel and Q the ministries of Jesus and John overlap, and one cannot exclude the possibility that John may have more influence upon Jesus than is suggested by the title 'forerunner'. There is also a chapter on Conflict which discusses the various parties - Essenes, Pharisees, etc and also some of the areas of conflict - Sabbath, purity, and divorce.

The final chapter is entitled 'Who was Jesus of Nazareth?' Stanton asks "What holds the various strands of evidence together? What gives the story coherence?" The key to the story, we are told, is its ending. Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the last time not simply in order to 'minister' to its inhabitants. He went to confront the religio-political establishment with his claims that the Kingdom of God was at hand. Jesus believed that he had been sent by God as a prophet to declare authoritatively the will of God for his people; acceptance or rejection of him and of his message was equivalent to acceptance or rejection of God.

The style of the book is simple and attractive. There are, however, a few places where one might question some statements. For example, the statement on p118 that John 13:20 is almost identical in wording to Matthew 10:40 is misleading. The virtual identity is a feature of English translations; there is a marked dissimilarity in the Greek.

On pp166/7 the witness of John to Jesus is mentioned, and we are told that John 10:40-42 shows many of John's followers going to Jesus and saying, "Everything that John said about this man (i.e. Jesus) was true." We then read, "The evangelist then states many believed in Jesus as a result of John's witness. It is surely no coincidence that this final comment is identical with the opening comment in the Prologue: John came that many might believe (in Jesus) through him



(1:7)." It may well be a reasonable deduction that the many who came to Jesus at this time and place were followers of John and that they believed in Jesus as a result of John's witness, but the evangelist does not say so. The evangelist's final comment on John is not identical with that at 1:17.

That I have noted some slips is, however, a tribute to Professor Stanton who encourages his readers to examine evidence carefully and reasonably.

Vincent Parkin.

"HEAR THEN THE PARABLE": A Commentary on the Parables of Jesus, by Bernard Brandon Scott, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1989.

Surely no aspect of the Christian religion is more vital, urgent and exciting than the parables of Jesus. In these rural tales, unmistakably oral in form and deeply penetrating in nature we come near to the heart of Christianity. The parables contain the religion of Jesus, as opposed to religion about Jesus. Here is the faith in God which our Lord felt in his heart, lived day by day and taught to his friends.

However, getting back to the actual stories which Jesus told has posed a problem for scholars. Jeremias and others have shown how the New Testament church has re-interpreted the parables in different contexts and circumstances so that the original message of our Lord has been obscured by the needs of the church. (see J. Jeremias, "The Parables of Jesus", 1954) Scholars must set to work to excavate the original story from the sediment of church tradition which encrusts it.

Scott's contribution is to posit a solution based on the insights of structural analysis. According to

Scott we cannot uncover the original words of Jesus, but the original structure of the story can be detected. Scott seeks to isolate this original structure, and to "read" it line by line in order to recreate how such a tale would make its impact on the ears of the original hearers.

It is in this "reading" of the parables that Scott's work shines out as an original and valuable contribution to New Testament scholarship. Deftly Scott peels off the tight skin of trite religion and conventional wisdom and allows the living, breathing story to speak its offensive and surreal message in the face of what we expect and demand from a so-called religious story. Indeed it is in the surreal that the key to the parables is to be found. (But Scott never uses the word.) What appears to be just an every-day story of country-folk suddenly dissolves into a baffling poser, which invites the hearer to ask 'Is he really saying what I think he is saying?'. Therefore in the parables we find all the vineyard workers being paid the same amount even though some worked all day and some but one hour. We find the (foolish?) shepherd returning after finding his one lost sheep and perhaps discovering that the ninety-nine have been scattered on the hillside like the abandoned flock of Israel in Ezekiel 34. We find a woman hiding, yes hiding, leaven in three measures of meal, enough to feed a regiment. Only Genesis 18:6 can explain such a huge amount. We find the little mustard plant grown from a tiny seed side by side in our minds with the giant cedars of Lebanon. And there is that crazy merchant selling all that he has, selling out lock, stock and barrel in order to buy a precious pearl which he must then sell again in order to resume trading!

One can imagine Jesus' original hearers walking away from the story-teller shaking their heads in bewilderment and disbelief and saying, 'Surely this narrator cannot be serious. Samaritans just aren't like that - or are they?' A similar emotion will be

experienced by the reader of Scott's book as he reads each section analysing the individual parables. The reader is forced to ponder, then reject Scott's view, then reconsider. As Scott remarks on page 370: "The parable does not offer its hearer a definition of the kingdom, nor even tell what the kingdom is. Rather it offers a hearer a chance to define the kingdom."

Scott sees Jesus' purpose in the parables as primarily subversive. The stories take up stock religious or popular story-themes and undermine their conventional message. Scott explains: "The Jesus parables are not myth: they are antimyth. Because they disorder the mythical world, they are world-shattering."

So we find among the tales many which satirise conventional stories. Stock yarns about the finding of rare riches are mocked by the story of a humble housewife sweeping the house in search of a tiny coin. Scott calls this story a burlesque. The tale of Dives and Lazarus leads us to expect a patron-client relationship between the two. But death intervenes and the whole scene is transformed. Leaven which is rotten dough, an accursed thing, becomes a sign of the kingdom of God.

Scott observes three planes of reference within which the parables operate. First is the everyday. The standard Jewish stories of kings and princes are replaced by tales about 'a certain man', an anonymous Jew living in an ordinary everyday world of lost sons, angry sons, swindling stewards, nagging widows, absentee landlords and gardeners shovelling manure on fig-trees.

The second plane on which the parables operate is the unclean. Jesus shocks his hearers by daring to use the unclean as a metaphor for God's reign. The little parable of the leaven is of great importance here, for in the Old Testament only the unleavened can point to

the holy. But the creeping corruption of rotten dough symbolises the way God's presence undermines our respectable religion. Women are also part of the unclean. The lost coin and the leaven centre on a woman and the prodigal's father is more like a mother in his constant forgiveness and nurture of his two sons. Scott notes that 'he refuses to defend his male honour, which both sons insult.'

The miraculous is the third plane on which the parables operate and again the stock religious miracle theme is subverted by Jesus. In the parables miracle is muted. The miraculous, the one area which we always link with God's victory, is confined and restricted in these tales. A field does eventually yield a hundredfold; a Samaritan takes care of the robbers' victim; a father takes back both his wayward sons. 'These are miracles, aren't they?' the teasing parables seem to be asking.

Many of Scott's conclusions are controversial. He departs from the well-worn paths of his predecessors, Jeremias, Dodd, Crossan, etc. But those who would refute him must match Scott's scholarship. He has explored every possible source of light including the Old Testament, the rabbinic literature, contemporary Greek, Roman and Egyptian thought and those giants of our times who laid the foundations of modern research into the parables. 'Hear then the Parable' is a massive work of meticulous scholarship.

The sinister, surreal frontier world which Jesus' closeness to God led him to inhabit is well portrayed here; and what is most thrilling for the reader, Scott cleverly lures us into the bewildering reversals of God's kingdom as it dawns in our midst today and overthrows our false assumptions. It is not without impact that Scott quotes Kafka:



"If you only followed the parables,  
you yourself would become parables,  
and with that, rid of all your daily  
cares."

Denis Campbell.

Paul and Jesus edited by A.J.M. Wedderburn (JSNT  
Supplement Series 37), JSOT Press, Sheffield, 1989. Pp.  
202. £20.00

At the beginning of this century the relation of Paul's thought to that of Jesus was widely discussed because of the argument of liberal theologians that Paul had been a second founder of Christianity who had destroyed the simple religion of Jesus. The problem was lost sight of during the reign of the Biblical Theology movement but has again come to the fore, perhaps through the loss of certainty in moving from the Gospels to Jesus. Dr Wedderburn, one of the younger leading New Testament scholars, has put together in this book a collection of papers most of which were originally presented at a seminar of the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas running through several years. After a brief introductory chapter from the editor setting out the nature of the problem V.P.Furnish presents a historical survey of its treatment from Baur to Bultmann. N.Walter then examines the content of Paul's knowledge of Jesus as revealed in his writings. Here, he wisely adopts a minimalist position so that the difficulties facing those who wish to move from Jesus to Paul may not be underestimated. C.Wolff deals with the question whether it was important in Paul's eyes to know about Jesus concentrating on elucidating the meaning of 2 Cor. 5:16. Two papers then follow from the editor in the first of which he looks to see what elements of continuity may exist in the way Jesus and

Paul thought and finds this in the nature of their 'experience'; though Paul may be thought to have stressed the element of 'Spirit' the Spirit was always the Spirit of Jesus. Some differences in the approach of Jesus and Paul arose from their different situations. In the second of these papers Wedderburn argues that the ministries of both Jesus and Paul were characterised by what might be described 'as an openness to the outsider' (.143). A second paper from Wolff compares the conduct of Jesus and Paul; it is probably impossible to determine from Paul's letters in how far he regarded his conduct as moulded by Jesus yet there are 'some remarkable correspondences with individual features of Jesus' life' (p.160). In the final main paper Wedderburn examines how much of the 'story' of Jesus is to be found in Paul; since for Paul that story contains both pre and post incarnation periods this leads leads him to discuss the nature of myth in relation to Jesus. Wedderburn also provides a final brief summarising chapter. The different essays hang well together and open up the various aspects of the problem. Dr Wedderburn is to be congratulated not only on his own contributions but on his skill on welding together those of others so that we are given a rounded approach and are able to appreciate the magnitude of a much neglected problem.

E. Best



## IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

### Contributions

Contributions are welcome, especially in English. They should always be submitted in hard copy, but if possible, they should be accompanied by a copy on a 5 1/4" IBM -PC Compatible floppy disk.

They should be sent direct to:

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The Editor does not necessarily agree with the view(s) expressed in articles accepted.

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